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Letter dated 22 January 2016 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Burundi to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to submit to you the Communiqué of the Government of Burundi (see annex) following the horrifying video distributed by Bernard Maingain to the French medium "France 3".

I kindly request you to share its contents with the other Security Council member States as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Evariste **Ngendankengera**
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Communiqué following the horrifying video distributed by Bernard Maingain to the French medium "France 3"

1. On Wednesday, 13 January 2016, the Government of Burundi followed with attention and with great indignation the broadcasting on the French television channel France 3, very violent and gruesome clips of an audiovisual recording on alleged crimes which according to the channel may have been committed at the beginning of last week in Burundi, specifically in Karuzi, centre of Burundi, by Burundian security forces, and by youth from the ruling party, called Imbonerakure. Channel France 3 states that it obtained the clips with the help of Bernard Maingain, a Belgian lawyer defending the cause of the radical opposition and especially the coup plotters of 13 May 2015.

2. The broadcasting of this video curiously coincides with the expected arrival of a delegation of the Security Council sent to report on the state of security in the country, somehow a way to try to disrupt this visit or adversely affect its results.

3. The Government of Burundi wishes to inform national and international opinion that the clips broadcast by channel France 3 were not filmed in Burundian, much less in recent days. Evidenced by the dilapidated appearance of the clips and the language spoken there, nowhere similar to any language or dialect used throughout the subregion. The Government condemns in the strongest terms the dissemination of these images intended not only to tarnish the image of Burundi and its institutions, but also to torpedo the inter-Burundian dialogue efforts initiated by the Government and supported by the entire international community.

4. The Government of Burundi wishes to bring to the attention of the national and international community the fact that this is not the first time that the French press, in collaboration with some critics of Burundi from some political circles and the civil society hostile to the democratic principle, has disseminated defamatory and insulting information on Burundi, especially in specific crucial moments in the life of the country.

5. The story by the journalist Pauline Simonet on television channel France 24, should indeed be recalled, one year before the 2015 election, a story about an alleged rebellion that was emerging in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to attack Burundi. The ridiculous side of the story is that the head of the supposed rebellion, called General Moïse, was a Congolese of Rwanda decent, speaking only English or Kinyarwanda. Invited by the Government to apologize for being manipulated, the journalist declined the offer, evidence that she was mandated to fabricate the existence of a hypothetic rebellion.

6. We also recall the much written and talked about alleged military training of youth called "Imbonerakure" in Kiliba Ondes also in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: a story forged by a self-styled human rights defender, Pierre Claver Mbonimpa, president of the Association for the Protection of Human Rights and Persons Detained (APRODH), to camouflage a real rebellion that was training from the same place and whose attack was perpetrated on 30 December 2014 in Cibitoke to torpedo the elections of May 2015 whose preparations were advanced. One

should also bear in mind the role played by the French media in connection with this event, with the use of images of dead bodies of alleged Imbonerakure, faked images dating back more than five years, a manipulation that eventually led Pierre Claver Mbonimpa to court to face justice.

7. During the insurgency observed in some boroughs of the capital over the election period, Radio France Internationale RFI and France 24 journalists were dispatched to cover this event labelled "a live genocide" which was to accompany the insurgency and fortunately, much to their disappointment did not happen. The journalists showed particular zeal alongside insurgents whom they begged to go out of their homes particularly in the districts of Mutakura and Musaga so that they could obtain images of violence to publish.

8. The broadcasting by the French television channel France 3 of an extremely violent and shocking video on Karuzi and on the eve of the visit of a delegation of the Security Council in Burundi falls into this same logic of French media in the Burundian crisis. This is an excessive demonization strategy of the institutions in order to divide the Burundian population and influence the international community to decide and accelerate the sending of a peacekeeping force, a force once claimed by the coup plotting opposition but vigorously decried by Burundians. Indeed, for a country at peace, with defence and security forces reassuringly composed and which have already proven effective across borders, the population does not find the need and interest of arrival on its soil, of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR)-like troops or a Turquoise Operation whose effectiveness in neighbouring Rwanda has not been convincing at all.

9. The Government of Burundi, however, wonders whether the French authorities approve the destabilizing actions of the media, or in the case of personal initiatives of each medium for purely commercial purposes, in which case the Government would act accordingly to end the promotion of lies, hatred and violence arising therefrom, without excluding the prosecution of perpetrators of these fabrications, including Bernard Maingain.

10. It should be recalled that the choice of Karuzi district was not haphazardly made, when we remember that two months ago, an activist of the radical opposition party Movement for Solidarity and Democracy (MSD) of Alexis Sinduhije was caught while disseminating leaflets calling the Hutu population to exterminate the Tutsi, while the leaflets disseminator is himself a Tutsi. You can imagine what would have happened if the person had not been caught red-handed. These falsehoods, with the specific case of the France 3 program in mind, sufficiently prove to what extent genocide remains an obsession and an opportunity for some milieus where everyone benefits from the dividend, either political for politicians and powers which contribute to instability in Burundi, or financial for the business-oriented media and some business circles like Bernard Maingain and for all those who endorse manipulated reports disseminated into the international community. The argument of the third term of President Nkurunziza is no longer a pretext to carry out a plan to destabilize Burundi initiated for several years as the truth is beginning to come to light.

11. The Government of Burundi takes this opportunity to refute and strongly reject the allegations by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, over ethnic massacres and collective sexual violence by Burundian security forces. The report goes further in the direction of critics

claiming that on the basis of evidence, an imminent threat of ethnic confrontation and genocide weighs upon Burundi. It is clear that the evidence referred to by the author of the report was collected from the perpetrators of terrorist acts regularly carried out in some areas of Bujumbura. These are the same sources that inspired their lawyer Bernard Maingain whose hatred and aversion against Burundi are known to all and reaching a climax today with the cynical forgery and broadcasting by France 3 of a video devoid of any morality with the only goal, the demonization of Burundian institutions.

12. Not only these allegations are false and baseless scaremongering threats, but also the composition of Burundian security forces in accordance with the Arusha Accords, do not allow such acts of rape or ethnic atrocities let alone genocide in Burundi as alleged by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

13. This ethnically balanced composition is described by the Arusha Accords as a bulwark against genocide and coups; this explains the failure of past destabilization attempts in this case the attempted coup of 13 May 2015 and the recent attack against military camps on 11 December 2015. Moreover, the victims of the terrorist attacks against the security forces are counted without ethnic distinction, which explains their solidarity during peacekeeping operations, either in Burundi or abroad. It is for this reason that the enemies of peace are trying in vain to break the defence and security forces as they are a major obstacle to their selfish ambitions.

14. The Government of Burundi continues to prove to the international community that peace and security reign throughout the national territory with the exception of some attacks by terrorist groups in some areas of the city of Bujumbura. Diplomatic missions accredited to Burundi are witnesses, what remains to be known is whether the reports sent to their respective governments are objective. Therefore, the Government of Burundi condemns all these falsehoods to manipulate and mislead international opinion until the General Secretariat of the United Nations, its Security Council and the European Union, which the Government asks to do a rereading of the alarmist and manipulated reports that have been submitted by certain lobbies with a hidden agenda to maintain a situation of permanent insecurity in Burundi and consequently review their perception and some of their positions on Burundi.

15. The Government of Burundi wishes to reiterate to the national and international community its determination to ensure the unity, cohesion and security of the people of Burundi. To do this, the Government is committed to pursuing relentlessly and supporting inclusive inter-Burundian dialogue already initiated both inside and outside under the facilitation of Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of Uganda.

16. While thanking the regional and international community of the continued support it has always given to the people of Burundi, the Government asks them to continue their efforts and the assistance needed for the internal inclusive dialogue process so that Burundi could quickly regain stability.

17. The Government concludes by commending the members of the defence and security forces for their courage and solidarity despite a sometimes difficult working environment because of both external and internal challenges. The Government asks them to keep that spirit of unity and discipline in their daily missions both in Burundi and elsewhere their expertise would be sought. And to the

population, the Government asks them to remain calm and united and to attend to the development work to fight poverty, which is their sole real enemy.

Done at Bujumbura, 18 January 2016

Philippe **Nzobonariba**
Secretary-General and Spokesman of the Government